



**Advocacy for Patients  
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**Testimony of Jennifer C. Jaff, Esq.  
On H.B. 6693**

I want to begin by thanking the Co-Chairs, Senator Handley and Representative Sayers, along with all of the members of the Committee, for convening this hearing to discuss what, for us, is the single most important public policy proposal that this Committee – that the General Assembly – will consider this year.

By proclamation of Governor Rell, today is Patient Advocate Day in Connecticut. This is fitting because, as a patient advocate, the most critical problem I face over and over is the inability of patients with chronic illness to find health insurance that will cover a pre-existing condition, or to find insurance that even the wealthy among us would consider affordable.

Governor Rell's proclamation states that "access to healthcare is a basic human need and a shared societal responsibility." The Governor also states that "it is important that the State of Connecticut remains committed to focusing on ensuring access to healthcare for those in need." "The State of Connecticut is dedicated to promoting effective, sound and fair healthcare for all its citizens . . . ." These principles are best served through a single payer healthcare plan.

Those of us with chronic illnesses know that, one way or another, the government, our employers, and society as a whole are burdened by the costs of our care, above and

beyond the burden we and our families carry alone, which is substantial. We have experienced a dramatic increase in the number of uninsureds and under-insureds, while those of us with insurance have seen both our insurance premiums and the actual costs of medically necessary treatments explode over the past few years, to the point at which we, as a society, are faced with nothing short of a crisis. The most efficient, fair and economical way of resolving this crisis is with a single payer healthcare plan.

As a patient advocate, there is not a day that goes by when I am not faced with the impossible problem of trying to find solutions to this crisis. Frankly, there are not enough patient advocates in Connecticut to fully and adequately address the need to locate resources, appeal insurance noncoverage decisions, and otherwise meet the financial and medical needs of the chronically ill. A single payer system not only would ensure that our needs are met, but it would spread the costs of our care evenly, and it would allow the State to negotiate rates that would bring down the costs of health care for everyone.

I cannot urge you strenuously enough to adopt a single payer system. This is by far the best solution to a vexing and otherwise impossibly difficult social challenge. It is affordable. It is fair. It ensures access to healthcare for all. It is economically sound in that it will actually bring down the costs of healthcare. It is socially responsible, ensuring that the costs of healthcare in Connecticut are spread throughout all participants in a single pool.

I am proud to live in a State in which a single payer option has drawn such widespread support. I trust that you will give this proposal due consideration, and that, once you have concluded your study, you will support our efforts to ensure affordable and adequate access to healthcare through the fairest and most fiscally sound means, a single payer system.

On this day – Patient Advocate Day – I ask that you stand in the shoes of patient advocates in Connecticut and support H.B. 6693.

Thank you.